

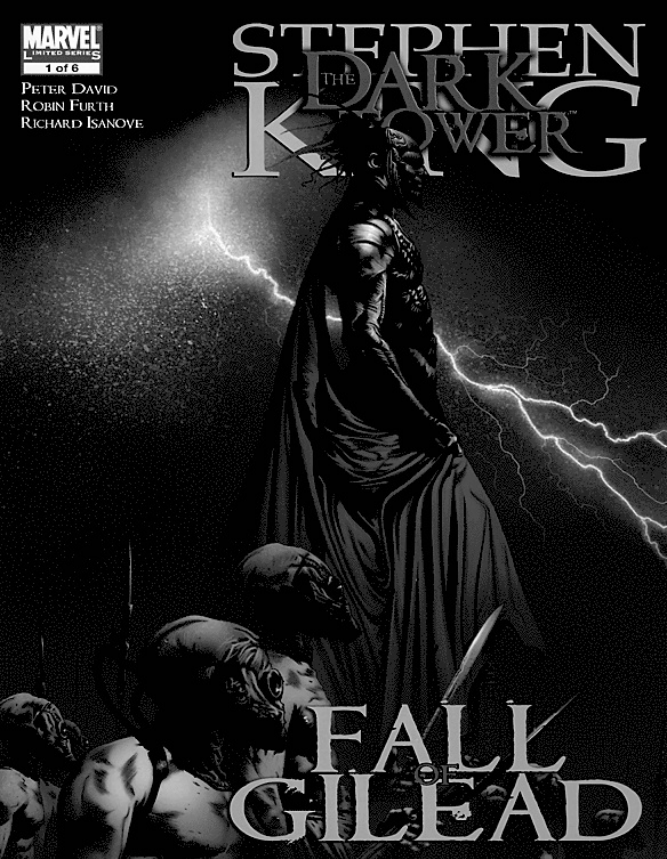
VISIT...

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

MARVEL
LIMITED SERIES
1 of 6

PETER DAVID
ROBIN FURTH
RICHARD ISANOVE

STEPHEN THE DARK KNIGHT KNOWING



FALL OF GILEAD

STEPHEN THE DARK KING TOWER

CREATIVE DIRECTOR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
STEPHEN KING

ART
RICHARD ISANOVE

PLOTTING AND CONSULTATION
ROBIN FURTH

COLOR ASSISTS
DEAN WHITE

SCRIPT
PETER DAVID

LETTERING
CHRIS ELIOPOULOS

PRODUCTION
ANTHONY DIAL
& PAUL ACERIOS

VICE PRESIDENT OF CREATIVE
TOM MARVELLI

ASSISTANT EDITOR
MICHAEL HORWITZ

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES, PUBLISHING
DAVID GABRIEL

SENIOR EDITOR
RALPH MACCHIO

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT
RUWAN JAYATILLEKE

COVER
JAE LEE

EDITOR IN CHIEF
JOE QUESADA

PUBLISHER
DAN BUCKLEY

SPECIAL THANKS TO CHUCK VERRILL, MARSHA DEFILIPPO, RALPH VICINANZA, BARBARA ANN MCINTYRE, BRIAN STARK, JIM NAUSEDAS, JIM MCCANN, ARUNE SINGH, CHRIS ALLO, JEFF SUTER, JOHN BARBER, LAUREN SANKOVITCH, NICOLE BOOSE AND JIM CALAHORE.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON DARK TOWER COMICS, VISIT MARVEL.COM/DARKTOWER

TO FIND MARVEL COMICS AT A LOCAL COMIC SHOP, CALL 1-888-COMICBOOK.

DARK TOWER: THE FALL OF GILEAD No. 1, July, 2009. Published Monthly by MARVEL PUBLISHING, INC., a subsidiary of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT, INC. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 417 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10016. © 2009 Stephen King. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Stephen King, Marvel and its logos are TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. \$5.99 per copy in the U.S. (GST #R12703052) in the direct market; Canadian Agreement #4066657. Printed in the USA. ALAN FINE, CEO Marvel Publishing Division and EVP & CMD Marvel Characters E.V.; DAN BUCKLEY, President of Publishing - Print & Digital Media; JIM SCHICLOWSKI, Chief Operating Officer; DAVID GABRIEL, SVP of Publishing Sales & Circulation; DAVID BOGART, SVP of Business Affairs & Talent Management; MICHAEL PASZCULL, VP Merchandising & Communications; JIM O'NEIL, VP of Operations & Logistics; DAN DARR, Executive Director of Publishing Technology; JUSTIN F. GABRIE, Director of Publishing & Editorial Operations; SUSAN CRESPI, Editorial Operations Manager; ALEX MORALES, Publishing Operations Manager; STAN LEE, Chairman Emeritus. For information regarding advertising in Marvel Comics or on Marvel.com, please contact Mitch Dane, Advertising Director, at mdane@marvel.com. For Marvel subscription inquiries, please call 800-271-9158.

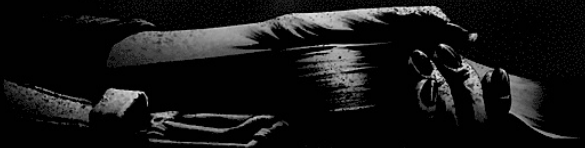


IN A WORLD THAT HAS MOVED ON...

Earning the title of gunslinger at the unheard-of age of fourteen, young Roland Deschain quickly became a target for his father's enemies, namely John Farson, and was forced to flee his home of Gilead or face death.

Roland returned to Gilead equipped with Farson's greatest prize: the sphere known as Maerlyn's Grapefruit, an object he almost died obtaining. Still under the mentally destructive influence of the sphere, Roland kept it hidden from his father Steven until his ka-tet forced him to reveal it. Wisely, Steven locked it away so it could harm no one.

As Gilead prepared for the festive celebration of its newly-titled gunslingers, Roland's mother prepared to repent for her adulterous sins with the sorcerer Marten. Seemingly out of nowhere, Marten appeared and lured Gabrielle into becoming the prime element in the planned assassination of her husband Steven with the help of Farson's spy. Distrusting his returned mother, Roland left the festivities to find the sphere hidden away in her chambers. The sphere drew him into a hallucination that provoked him into fatally shooting Gabrielle...



Fill 'em with bullet holes and they might allow themselves to be yanked, kickin' and protestin', into unconsciousness.

But just passing out all womanish 'cause somethin's gone so bad that they can't take it no more and their brain just shuts down?

Nah. That don't happen. To you and me, p'haps, but not gunslingers.

'Cept now, in this case, in this moment. 'Cause there's Roland Peschain, out cold, dead to the world.

In his defense, though, he's young and inexperienced...





Gunlingers don't
faint. They just...

They don't.



...and his mother is lying five
feet away, also dead to the
world, but dead in the way
that don't include waking
up ever.

And he was the one what
gunned her down, tricked
into it by the forces of
John Farson.

So we can pardon
him his weakness.

And if ya happen to be
the sort what believes
in ghosts...



...then we're not the
only ones offering
absolution at this
moment.



Oh
Roland. Oh, my
sweet boy.

Look what I
have brought down
upon us. Everything
is so clear to me now,
as it never was
in life.

'Twas not your
fault, my dearest
love. We were betrayed,
the both of us. My pain
is done, but yours, alas,
is *just* beginning.

I would give
anything to spare you the
heartache to come...but I've
naught *left* to give save
forgiveness. And that I
provide willingly, as I
pray you will to me.

Forgive us
both, my son.
We knew not
what we did.



Mother...?



He don't remember everything that happened at first. He has to piece it together a little at a time.

The hunt for Maerlyn's Grapefruit, stolen from his father's study through Gabrielle's treachery.

His furious pursuit of his mother to her own chambers, where he found himself staring into that damnable magic sphere yet again...

...and seeing behind him, in its reflection, the wicked Rhea of the Coos ready to garrote him.



And he turned and fired, and there was his mother, holding a hand crafted belt, a gift for him, and she had a startled look on her face and blood on her chest.



By that point, he understands.

By that point, as he tries to stop the sucking chest wound and realizes that her body is already growing cold...

...it's too late.





John Farson's spider's web had reached to the innermost recesses of Gilead. But Farson's nephew, at least, won't be around to see it.

Shufft
Shufft

Oh, stop
your huffing
and puffing,
Cuthbert. It
was just some
stairs.



Ten flights
of stairs! While
carrying a
corpse!

Considering
the number of
people who want
to kill us, and that
we're all armed
besides...

You'd think the
morgue would be
more accessible
since we're
obviously going
to be needing
it!



Complain as you wish, Bert. As for me, I was pleased just to be given the opportunity to help.

That *desperate* to be considered a man, are you, Aileen, that you enjoy even the most unpleasant duties?

I'll settle for being considered a *person*, and let the rest attend to itself.



Speaking of attending to persons...

We weren't speaking of it actually, but what is it, Alain?

I noticed you and Roland departed early. *Pare* I ask...?



We talked, Alain. That's all. Mostly about *Susan*, if you must know.

Oh, *come now*, Aileen. Your charms can't outstrip even a dead girl's?

SMACK

Ow! Hey!

Ka-Mail!

I am
not a
fool!

Your
words indicate
otherwise!

The mark of
a truly great fool,
Alsin, is his willingness
to speak truth even if
it hurts. And the answer
is no, apparently my
"charms" can't.

Even his
mother, whom he
clearly disdains, holds
more interest for him.
He went off in pursuit
of her when she
ran past.

That's...
odd. Why
would he...
unless...?

He thought
she was up to
something?

The lady
of Gilead, a
villain?

Lock up the
morgue and let us
away. This warrants
investigation.



"Twas fortunate, Cort, that you found this ring in Kingdon's pocket, proving his connection to Farson.

Otherwise *some* might believe you killed him simply because he won at riddles.



He did *not* win, Steven. He *cheated*, thus proving the point.

The point being that one who would cheat at riddles is automatically *evil* enough to be allied with the enemy of Gilead?

Well...aye. Obviously.

If he was a spy, he was a cautious one. Nothing here in his room incriminates him.

He had Farson's signet ring, Vannay! What, do you expect further proof to just fly down from on--



--high?

Look! The thing has a note tied to it!



"Will collect the grapefruit at midnight." Some manner of fruit-based code, perhaps...?



Not code. The grapefruit is that cursed sphere of Farson's. It's locked away in my study.

If 'twas locked away, how did Kingdon hope to retrieve it? Steal the key from you, perhaps?

Impossible! I have the key right...



...Right...

What's wrong?

I...don't believe it! He must have *snatched* it! But how? He was nowhere near me at any point!

Was anyone else in close contact with you tonight?



"Milord? I said--"

"I heard you. And yes. Yes, there was, damn her."

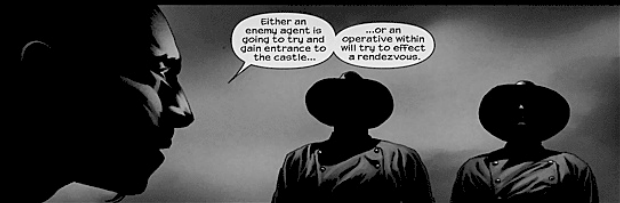


"Her?" Lord
Deschain, you're
not saying...?"

Anything.
I'm not saying
anything until
I know of a
certainty.

Providence
has given us
warning of our
enemy's plans.

And we
shall make full
use of it.



Either an
enemy agent is
going to try and
gain entrance to
the castle...

...or an
operative within
will try to effect
a rendezvous.



"The castle is to
be put on high alert.



"Patrols on the walls.
Have them keep to the
shadows. We do not wish
to alert intruders from
afar that we await them.

"There are to be two guards posted at every way in or out.

"Anyone coming or going is to be brought to me for questioning. And I mean anyone, regardless of standing or rank.

"All are under suspicion, be they our fellow gunslingers, the children of our loins...

...or the women of our beds.

Cort. Vannay. Continue to search the room. See if any other clues present themselves.

Maybe a *dove* will appear with a complete list of Farson's allies.

No, Lord Deschain.

Study my face, Vannay. Do I look as if I am in the mood for levity?

Good. Guards, with me.

Cort, my old friend...do you *truly* think that throwing Kingson's papers around is the most *efficient* way to proceed?

I'm *not* thinking right now, Vannaj. I'm busy blaming myself.

For what?



If I hadn't slain that bastard, we could be *questioning* him instead of trying to find his leavings.

I will not let anyone be *harm*ed due to *his* schemes and *my* impulsiveness! Do you hear?



I will *protect* this castle and all within!



Well, you've certainly protected us from that *pillow*. It will harm *no one* ever again.





Cort...I suspect
there's more on your
mind than your own
culpability.

We both know what
preys upon you: The
likelihood that
Gabrielle Peschain
is a traitor.

I was taught
as a child never
to speak the
worst aloud,
lest the worst
sees it as an
invitation.



I cannot fathom
it. I've known her
since childhood. Her
father was an
honorable man.

So are they
all, all honorable
men, *and* women. But
if they honor the
enemies of
Gilead...



"...then whoever they
are, *ditn's* wife or no,
they will hang for it."



Vannay...
with all respect...
I would be alone
for a time.



As you wish.
I'm too old to be
crawling around
under beds anyway.
But consider
this, Cort...

"...if Gabrielle is a traitor to her people and her bed, the chances are that she is not *wholly* responsible.

"Marten Broadcloak may well have stolen her mind and her heart. However, he did it not through the goodness of his soul...



"...but rather through the darkness of his arts. This business stinks of sorcery, Cort. And sorcery can catch anyone unawares, at any time. Even the canny can be undone by the uncanny.

"In the face of such power, even the most clever individuals in the world can find themselves left with nothing."



Damnation!





Never--
never in my life--
have I so very much
wanted to be
wrong.



Perhaps...there
is yet an explanation.
Circumstances are not
always what they
seem, they...

Then he spots it
on the floor.



The broken remains of
a bracelet he gave to his
wife many years ago...

...during a time that,
if anyone had suggested
he would ever utter the
next words to emerge
from his lips, he would
have laughed.



He is not laughing now.

We must
find my wife
and...

And what,
milord?

And
arrest the
bitch.

Meanwhile, Cort's frustration grows as his efforts lead to naught...

It simply makes no *sense* that he would have nothing here to incriminate him!

He *wouldn't* have been that concerned about being caught! I know the type. Smug, arrogant...

...certain that they can commit crimes with impunity and--

Eh?

This floorboard seems a bit loose.

Could be nothing.

Or it could be--



--something!



Ha! Now I *really* regret killing the little cretin!

I would have loved to see his face when we uncovered this little stash!

Books.
Maps...



...a journal!



The late Kingdon may have left us all the information we need to bring Farson crashing down!

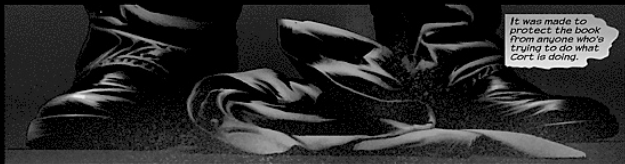


Cort eagerly unwraps the hidden journal that Kingson has left behind...



...tossing aside the dustcloth so he can peruse the book. He flips through the text, licking his fingers as he does so to facilitate turning the pages.

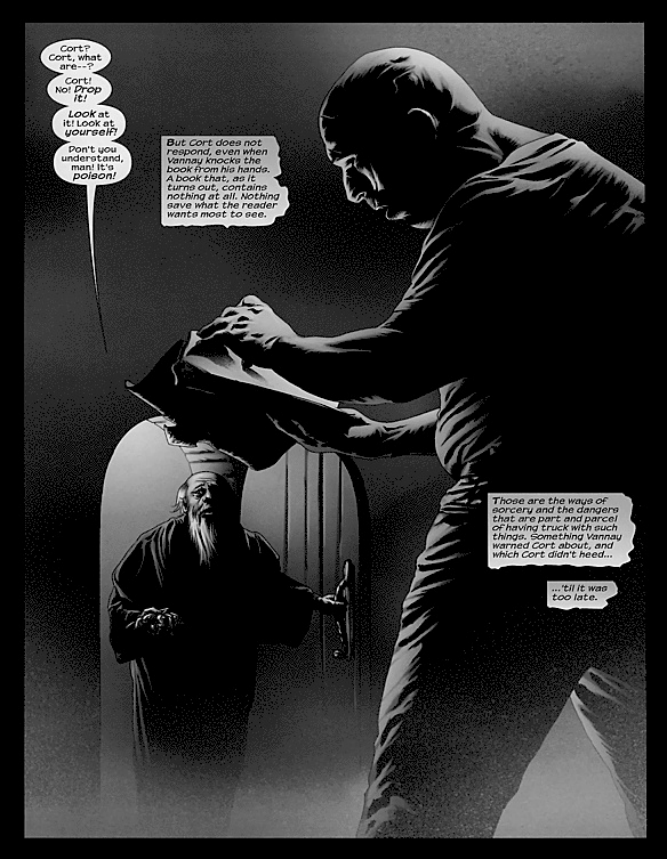
Unfortunately, what Cort don't ken is that the cloth weren't just designed to protect the contents from dust.



It was made to protect the book from anyone who's trying to do what Cort is doing.



I think I've left my old friend alone long enough to stew in his own juices.



Cort?
Cort, what
are---?

Cort!
No! Drop
it!

Look at
it! Look at
yourself!

Don't you
understand,
man! It's
poison!

But Cort does not respond, even when Vannay knocks the book from his hands. A book that, as it turns out, contains nothing at all. Nothing save what the reader wants most to see.

Those are the ways of sorcery and the dangers that are part and parcel of having truck with such things. Something Vannay warned Cort about, and which Cort didn't heed...

... 'til it was too late.

Elsewhere...

Normally Steven Peachain walks so softly that he can come up on ya like a ghost.

Not now, though. Now his feet are heavy as he walks like a condemned man to the gallows.

'Cept he's not the one going to the gallows. Least that's what he's figuring.

Gabrielle!
Open the door,
"my love."

You who
hold the key
to my heart...

...and my
safe!

Gabrielle!
I said...!

He recognizes the smell
before his eyes adjust to
the darkness.

A gunslinger would
know the stench of
death, after all.

Roland...



*God in
heaven!*

Roland! Do you
know who *did* this?!
If so, speak the walking
dead man's name so that
I may visit his final
fate upon him!

TO BE CONTINUED

POISONED PEN. POISONED BOOK:

THE FALL OF CORTLAND ANDRUS

As the writer in charge of plotting *The Fall of Gilead*, I've faced several major challenges. The first—and perhaps the most difficult to overcome—was my own grief. As I created the story that begins with the issue that you have just finished, I could barely see for tears. Tragedy loomed over me. Not only had I already let my beloved dinh Roland murder his own mother, but I was already plotting—nay, scheming—how to breach the defenses of Roland's home city and how to most efficiently attack the people he called family and ka-tet. To spin *The Fall of Gilead*, I have had to lay down my gunslinger's six-guns and take up the banner of

chaos and evil carried by Walter O'Dim's many aliases who, like me, have the initials R.F. In order to recreate the horrors of Gilead's final battle, I had to begin to think like an agent of the Outer Dark and become a traitor to my adopted city. Like Richard Fannin, Rudin Filario, and the notorious Randall Flagg, I had to sell my soul to the Crimson King.

Over the next five to six months, you will witness much that makes you want to avert your eyes. My hands and my pen are stained with blood, though whose blood will drench the pages to come I will not yet reveal. The pain, and the pleasure, is in the waiting. However, as readers of the novels know, I did not play Judas by choice. Far from it. My treachery was born of loyalty to my other dinh, Stephen King. Roland's life is a tale of romance and tragedy, and so I had to relate what Roland experienced, both for good and for dis. In other words, in order to stand and be true to sai King, I have had to put Roland through hell.





But even as I painted a staring red eye (Eye of the King!) atop my computer keyboard, I knew I was about to face an even greater challenge. How could I wage the Red King's war upon Gilead? After all, I have no battle experience, while Roland, his tet, and his mentors are all hardened warriors. More often than not I knew my characters' fates from the Dark Tower books, but frequently the means by which these fates come to pass is not revealed by sai King either in his books or in his emails. (Sometimes he likes to let me figure things out for myself.) For example, I knew Cortland

Andrus had to be poisoned—I knew that from the novels—but how could I deliver that poison? How could I fool such a canny and experienced soldier into swallowing something that smelled strange or that looked suspicious? Killing Roland's mother had been relatively easy—all I had to do was describe the scene as told in Wizard and Glass. But to poison Cort? That was a different matter!

Over the course of creating The Fall of Gilead I discovered that being ka's Grim Reaper is no easy job. However, I also discovered

a few tricks of my own. So as to please my fellow Constant Readers (and to please sai King, which is always first and foremost in my heart and mind), I knew I had to make my tale convincing, and in order to poison Cort in a realistic manner I turned to the great poisoners of history. I might not know how to fool Gilead's weaponmaster into imbibing or inhaling a deathly toxin, but in the annals of history and literature there were plenty of women and men who did. All I had to do was to find those agents of the Crimson King and discover their secrets.

Those of you who have either read *Queen Margot*, written by Alexander Dumas, or seen the 1994 French film of the same name, will recognize the means by which Cort is poisoned. Like *The Fall of Gilead*, *Queen Margot* takes place during a time of great political upheaval. It is the year 1572, and Catherine de Medici, a French Catholic, rules through her weak son, King Charles IX. Catherine is a great poisoner, and when her son-in-law, the Protestant/Huguenot King, Henri of Navarre, displeases her, she decides to end his life. But like Cort, Henri is a wily man. He has lived in the shadow of deception and murder too long to be easily fooled by his treacherous mother-in-law, so Catherine must deliver her poison in as unusual a way as possible. Knowing that Henri is eager to learn about falconry, Catherine arranges to give him a rare and valuable book on the subject—a book whose pages are imbued with arsenic.

As a book lover, the idea of a poisonous book both amazed and horrified me. It was the most unusual method of poisoning I had ever heard of, and one which I doubted even the gunslingers of Gilead would suspect. Hence,

Cort's fate was sealed. He would be poisoned by a book of false war plans. And the final twist in Cort's tragedy is one that readers of *The Scorerer* one-shot will know well. The toxic book which Cort reads so avidly is not really a book about war plans at all. The poisonous pages (created by none other than our favorite villain, Marten Broadcloak/Walter O'Dim) are actually blank leaves of psychic paper. In other words, the book which Cort discovers among the possessions of the recently deceased James Farson is a trap. For that psychic paper reflects whatever the reader most wants to see, the single thing that will make the book's hapless victim turn page after page, licking his fingers as he goes, imbibing the poison which will lead to annihilation. (As many of you might suspect, the psychic paper which fools Cort does not come from Alexander Dumas's novel but was borrowed from the pocket of the last Time Lord of the planet Gallifrey, Dr. Who.)

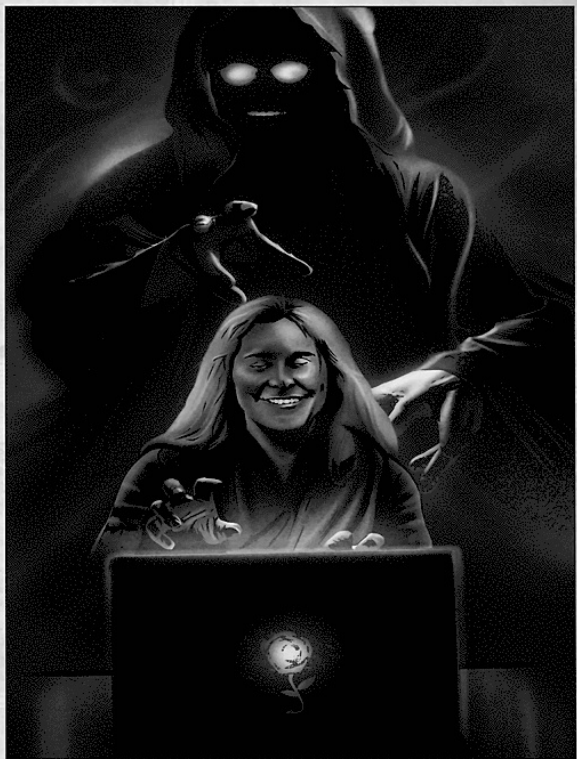
So my fellow Constant Readers, have your tissues and handkerchiefs ready. Much tragedy is to come. But remember, ultimately tragedy has meaning too. After all, even heartbreak serves the Beam, and heartbreak is what will ultimately make Roland such an unrelenting warrior. To reach the Dark Tower, Roland must trudge through blood as red as the roses of End-World. **CR**

WRITTEN BY:

ROBIN FURTH

ILLUSTRATED BY:

DENNIS CALERO



MATRICIDE



As the daughter and granddaughter of pathologists, and as a long time horror fan, I have a fairly high tolerance for gore. As I get older this tolerance decreases, but I'm still probably higher on the scale of what you can take than most folks. When I was a child, my sisters and I had a secret game. When my parents were downstairs we'd sneak into my dad's study and pull out his medical books. We'd choose a disease like gangrene or tertiary stage syphilis (the grosser the better) and we'd see who could stare at the affliction the longest. Although I was the youngest (and though for years I was excluded from the game on the grounds that I would cry and tell) by the time I was allowed to take part I always won, hands down.

I suppose that my ability to stare at those diseases had more to do with a profound compassion for the people afflicted by such horror than

with any innate pleasure in grossing myself out. After all, disease is a microbial or physical attack upon the body, and does not reflect upon the person whose mind and spirit reside within that body. I suppose that—on some level—my reactions may have been those of a nascent doctor or nurse rather than those specifically of a writer, and if I had been better at science than at English perhaps my life would have taken a very different course. However, this ability to look at rashes, diseases, open wounds and physical malformations had and continues to have an odd flip side. The body in pain does not disgust me, though it arouses a profound compassion for the individual so afflicted. And while I do not turn away from the blood and gore before me, the image of the spirit in torment—either from physical pain or from existential despair—makes me weep.

As you might expect, my high gore-tolerance has stood me in good stead as Stephen King's research assistant. It means that I can read about the crimes of child-eating cannibals like Albert Fish, or study the white worms squirming like maggots through a defective but fleshy North Central Positronics robot, and keep my cool. Yet sometimes I think it is my weakness—my automatic sympathy for, and identification with, an individual who is pressed to the wall by grief, existential despair, or the fear of the void—that has aided me





the most in my travels with the King of Horror. As every Constant Reader knows, Stephen King's novels aren't just about hauntings, psychic abilities, pierced-veils-between-worlds or attacking monsters. They are also about what makes us profoundly human . . . or inhuman.

I have always maintained that it is not ultimately the gore of a scary story that sends us running. Instead, it is the existential horror BEHIND the face of the knife or axe-wielding psycho (or demon) that terrifies. What makes someone a murderer, a rapist, a torturer? What makes someone take pleasure in another person's pain? Are these people really like the rest of us? And what about the person who commits a crime of passion and kills someone he or she loves? Once the blinding red fury has passed, how can

that person live with the knowledge of what he or she has done?

This might sound strange, but I have long suspected that it is my compassion for Roland Deschain's secret pain, rather than my love of his death-wielding guns, that has made him keep me as his traveling companion for so many years. For as those familiar with the original Dark Tower novels know, Roland Deschain is a murderer, but he is a murderer who ultimately wants to atone for his sins.

Back in 2005, when Marvel's journey with Roland Deschain had just begun, I was asked about the purpose of this Dark Tower prequel. I maintained then—as I do now—that what we are showing over the course of thirty comic books is the story of

Roland's transformation from a well-born boy to a bitter and dangerous man. Our goal—from Roland's coming-of-age battle in *The Gunslinger* Born to the final shootouts on Jericho Hill—is to show Roland's descent into the internal nightmare from which he must emerge over the course of the seven Dark Tower novels. In a series of comics, and then graphic novels, we show how Roland becomes the unrelenting warrior who tracks his quarry over barren desert after barren desert, killing his enemies—and occasionally his companions—without mercy.

So far, our comic books have dealt with the young Roland—a boy trained to be a killer, but one who still believes that his guns work solely for good. After all, he is a gunslinger born from a long line of gunslingers. He thinks that he and those of his kind can do no wrong. After all, they represent the White . . . don't they? But at the end of *Treachery* Roland's unquestioning faith in the ways of his fathers, and in his training, is challenged as profoundly as it could be challenged. Tricked by the glimmer of Maerlyn's Grapefruit and betrayed by his eye, his hand, and his instincts which have been honed to a killing edge, Roland shoots his mother, Gabrielle.

Honor thy father and thy mother. That is one of the most fundamental human beliefs. Yet Roland has just slaughtered the woman who bore him and in so doing has committed matricide. His preternaturally fast hands, and his years of training, have ultimately betrayed him.

The man in black fled across the desert, and the gunslinger followed. Every Dark Tower junkie knows that line by heart. But how many of us have stopped to contemplate the nature of that desert? How many of us have thought about why the green fields of Gilead dry up, or why her lush orchards turn to rot and weeds? At what point in history do the waters of Mid-World really begin to recede, and when does Gilead's fertility turn sterile?

In the days of old, men and women believed that the king, and the land he ruled, were one and the same. If the king sickened, the land died. Roland is directly descended from Arthur Eld, the ancient king of All-World, albeit from a gilly rather than a legitimate wife. Yet he is the last of his line and the last of his kind. After his father's death, he will be Mid-World's final dinh. Hence, what affects Roland affects his world. But the disease that is beginning to eat at Roland's heart is not physical but existential. At the end of *Treachery* and at the beginning of *The Fall of Gilead*, Roland takes the final, deadly step from childhood to manhood, and the last of his innocence falls away. If Roland proved his right to be called an adult by winning his six-shooters and remembering the face of his father in Gilead's Square Yard where he battled his teacher Cort, then he slaughtered the remains of his young self in his mother's chamber with those same guns.

If the king bears a sin so heavy that he can no longer afford to touch his own human emotions, something inside of him desiccates. If love is too painful to feel, because in order to survive all emotion must be placed behind a wall, otherwise it would drown the one who feels, then something within the self dies. Similarly, if the king can no longer drink from the cup of human feeling, then the land—which is but an extension of the king—becomes a desert.

For me, Roland's matricide is a turning point in his personal development. In fact, it is the pivotal point of his existence. In the convex pink glass of Maerlyn's Grapefruit, Roland saw his mother as his worst enemy. For a moment she transformed into the hag Rhea of the Cöös, and in that moment Roland shot her. But though this murder was a mistake, the rage behind the murder—and Roland's rage about the cuckolding of his father—was real. Hence, in his heart Roland knows that this act of violence wasn't a complete accident. On some level he wanted to punish his mother for her adultery, and ultimately that is what he does.



Seen through the distorting lens of Maerlyn's Grapefruit, and knowing that his hands are stained with the blood of the woman who bore him, Roland can look backwards and also blame himself for the death of his first lover, Susan Delgado. After all, he did not save her from the mob who burnt her on a Charyou Tree fire—a decision that is more conscious and obvious in the novels than in the comics. And as we know from the books, early on in their relationship Roland compares Susan to his own "whorish" mother. The murder of the mother

becomes also the murder of the beloved. It is a guilt worthy of Sigmund Freud's couch.

When we began work on this story arc, I was the one who wanted to call it *The Fall of Gilead*. Some of the folks in marketing worried that the title gave away too much of the plot, but I didn't think so. You see, ultimately the fall we witness isn't just the fall of a city or even a land: it's the fall of an individual. In that ancient way of thinking, Roland is Gilead. And when he succumbs to the treachery of his enemies and kills his mother, he loses that first piece of his soul.

Before Roland can reach the Dark Tower, he must journey through the deadly Mohaine Desert, which he does at the beginning of *The Gunslinger*. But in order to reach the Tower, Roland must also survey the desiccation of his spirit. The Roland we meet at the beginning of *The Gunslinger* is a man who carries a smoldering burden, but it is a man who wishes to shed that burden and fulfill his destiny as a servant of the White. If in the Dark Tower comics we see how Roland becomes a man, in the Dark Tower novels which come after, we see how Roland tries to reclaim the tortured, grieving boy that sleeps within him. **CR**

WRITTEN BY:
ROBIN FURTH
ILLUSTRATED BY:
DENNIS CALERO

**DARK TOWER:
FALL OF GILEAD
ISSUE #1
SKETCHBOOK**

**A look at the creative team's in-progress work,
including layouts, pencil art and cover concepts.**



Jae Lee's Cover Pencils.

Richard Isanove's black and white artwork.
The finished versions appear earlier in this issue.











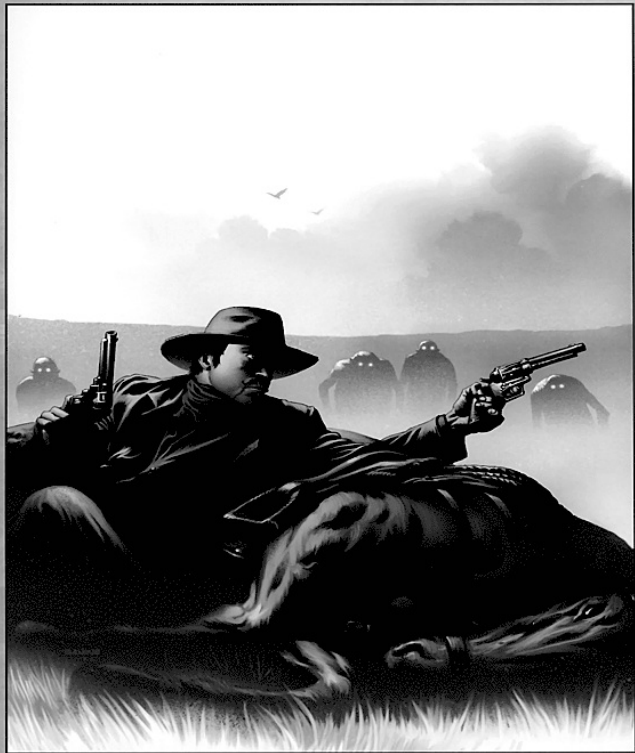
Richard Isanove's layouts with his notes.



Acclaimed Marvel superstar Adi Granov delivers this stunning variant cover.
The final piece is seen here with Adi's proposal sketch.



NEXT: With Roland imprisoned for Gabrielle's murder, who will stop Marten's magic from tearing apart the halls of Gilead? Can Steven Deschain protect his son from the law...or will he bow to the demands of courtly justice?





All is not well in Mid-World. Gunslinger Roland Deschain, the young man whose destiny it is to seek and save the Dark Tower, is haunted by horrifying visions from the evil seeing sphere, Maerlyn's Grapefruit. The Crimson King, enemy of all that lives, has long plotted the utter destruction of the Tower, and the undoing of reality itself. Now, with Roland unable to act, his monstrous foe has put his plan into motion...

From the creative team that brought Roland's early adventures to life in *The Dark Tower: The Gunslinger Born*, *The Dark Tower: The Long Road Home*, and *The Dark Tower: Treachery* comes the next chapter of this dark saga of friendship, betrayal and a cosmic quest as conceived by master storyteller Stephen King.

PARENTAL ADVISORY
FOR STRONG LANGUAGE & CONTENT

\$3.99 US
59169



7 59606 06310 9

WWW.MARVEL.COM

DIRECT EDITION



an oddBot scan
an oddBot





ot scan

ot scan
an oddBot scan